

# **Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot**

***Lacon, IL***

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

## BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Lacon for a Brownfields Pilot. Lacon (population 1,986) is a small rural community located in the Illinois River Valley, which relied heavily on the Lacon Woolen Mill for employment. When the mill closed in the late 1960s after 100 years of operation, the city lost a key business and residents lost their main employer. Lacon currently has an unemployment rate of 7 percent, and 55 percent of city residents are low- to moderate-income. The mill site is located in the city's South Ward, one of the poorest areas of Lacon.

The city obtained control of the 17-acre mill site in 1996, and discovered that the former mill's buildings, groundwater, soil, and floodplain were filled with a variety of contaminants, including asbestos, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The site is approximately 1,000 feet from the city's drinking water supply wells. Some preliminary investigation and cleanup has been performed, but a thorough assessment is necessary before the city can proceed with the rest of its cleanup and redevelopment activities. The mill site includes a four-acre parcel of former industrial property, two acres of Illinois River bank and floodplain, and eleven acres of Illinois River Bay.

## PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Lacon, Illinois*

**Date of Announcement:**  
March 1999

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot targets the 17-acre former Lacon Woolen Mill site, located on the banks of the Illinois River.

### Contacts:

City of Lacon  
City Hall  
(309) 246-3185

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

## OBJECTIVES

The City of Lacon plans to clean up the mill site and redevelop it to take advantage of the site's location on the banks of the Illinois River. Planned uses include a green area, public park, residential areas, retail, and restaurants. Since the site is adjacent to a public river access point, which includes small shops and restaurants, redevelopment would expand the existing riverfront and encourage tourism and recreational use. The Pilot will contribute to this objective by performing a comprehensive environmental investigation and assisting the city in developing cleanup plans.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Performing environmental assessments at the Lacon Woolen Mill site, including soil and groundwater analysis and assessment of the sediments and past filling of the river bank and bay; and
- Developing cleanup objectives and plans.

*The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*